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**ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING AND MULTILITERACIES IN A NON-  
GOVERNMENTAL BRAZILIAN ORGANIZATION: PROMOTING  
CITIZENSHIP AND EMPOWERMENT**

João Pessoa

2018

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Trabalho apresentado ao Curso de  
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requisito para obtenção do grau de  
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Orientadora: Prof<sup>a</sup>. Dr<sup>a</sup>. Angélica Araújo de  
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*“No one educates anyone else nor do we educate ourselves, we educate one another in communion in the context of living in this world”*

(Paulo Freire)

## ABSTRACT

The burgeoning array of texts, both verbal and non-verbal, that learners are bombarded with in the current era of information have bedevilled scholars when trying to understand how language educators have been assisting students to make meaning of the discourses available, and to tackle the cultural plurality and diversity emerging from novels, poems, videos, drawings or images that represent the different domains of our lives (KRESS, 1997; ROJO, 2009, 2013). Despite such diversity of meaning-making possibilities, other scholars (HAWKINS; NORTON, 2009; KLEIMAN, 2016) have pointed out the inefficiency of schools to cater for the need of marginalized groups, such as underprivileged students, immigrants and refugees to have equal access to language and literacy education, which may allow their full and active participation in diverse social contexts as informed and conscious citizens. Hence, this study aims at investigating how English lessons designed in light of the pedagogy of multiliteracies' principles (COPE; KALANTZIS, 2000, 2009), used a variety of multimodal (KRESS; van LEEUWEN, 2006; ALMEIDA, 2009; NASCIMENTO; BEZERRA; HEBERLE, 2011) texts as tool to promote language learning, empowerment and active citizenship of underprivileged children in a non-governmental Brazilian organization. It is a qualitative and interpretative research (ALVES, 2014; BORTONI-RICARDO, 2008) that considered as data source two classes taught to a group of about fifteen students, from 8 to 12 years old, at Casa Pequeno Davi, an institution located in João Pessoa – Paraíba. While the first class focused on the black awareness day and the African contributions to Brazilian culture, the second one dealt with jobs in English and what is expected from youngsters in their future working lives. The data encompasses the lesson plans, the materials (handouts, slides), videos and photos taken during the classes, and students' productions. In the analysis, we observed to what extent the phases of pedagogical action proposed by the pedagogy of multiliteracies were adopted; how learners redesigned the themes brought to discussion and what kind of meanings emerged from their productions, considering the expansion of linguistic and cultural knowledge; and how a multimodal analysis assisted in understanding how students perceived the different social realms of life approached in the lessons. The results showed that the lessons and the multimodal resources reflected the principles of the pedagogy of multiliteracies by situating locally and globally the texts presented in class, and with the teacher scaffolding a critical reading of the different modalities of language, for instance the videos, images, and advertisement campaigns. With the aid of a multimodal analysis, it was possible to see that students used some semiotic resources in their drawings, such as vectors, narrative tools (thinking bubbles) and salience (colour and size) to represent their new (de) constructed views. In sum, it was noticed that the lessons contributed to developing linguistic skills, fostering an empowered identity among the participants and encouraging the belief that they could become successful professionals in the future, and that they could learn to perform any existing job, regardless of colour, ethnic or social background.

**Keywords:** Empowerment. English language teaching. Multimodality. Pedagogy of multiliteracies.



## RESUMO

O crescente número de textos, tanto verbais como não verbais, com os quais os alunos são bombardeados na presente era da informação tem intrigado os estudiosos na compreensão de como os professores de idiomas podem ajudar esses alunos a dar significado aos discursos disponíveis, e a lidar com a pluralidade e diversidade cultural que se revelam em romances, poemas, vídeos, desenhos ou imagens referentes aos diferentes domínios de nossas vidas (KRESS, 1997; ROJO, 2009, 2013). Apesar dessa diversidade de possibilidades de construção de sentido, outros estudiosos (HAWKINS; NORTON, 2009; KLEIMAN, 2016) apontam a ineficiência das escolas em atender à necessidade de grupos marginalizados, como estudantes carentes, imigrantes e refugiados de terem igual acesso ao ensino de idiomas e letramento, permitindo sua participação plena e ativa em diversos contextos sociais, como cidadãos informados e conscientes. Assim, este estudo tem como objetivo investigar como aulas de inglês desenvolvidas à luz dos princípios da pedagogia de multiletramentos (COPE; KALANTZIS, 2000, 2009), utilizaram uma variedade de textos multimodais (KRESS; van LEEUWEN, 2006; ALMEIDA, 2009; NASCIMENTO; BEZERRA; HEBERLE, 2011) como ferramenta para promover a aprendizagem do idioma, o empoderamento e a cidadania ativa de crianças carentes em uma organização não-governamental brasileira. Trata-se de uma pesquisa qualitativa e interpretativa (ALVES, 2014; BORTONI-RICARDO, 2008), que considerou como fonte de dados duas aulas ministradas a um grupo de cerca de quinze alunos, de 8 a 12 anos, na Casa Pequeno Davi, instituição localizada em João Pessoa - Paraíba. Enquanto o primeiro encontro enfocou o dia da consciência negra e as contribuições africanas para a cultura brasileira, o segundo tratou de empregos em inglês e o que se espera dos jovens em suas futuras vidas profissionais. Os dados abrangem os planos de aula, os materiais (*handouts*, *slides*), vídeos e fotos tiradas durante os encontros e as produções dos alunos. Na análise, observamos em que medida as etapas de ação pedagógica propostas pela pedagogia dos multiletramentos foram seguidas; como os alunos redesenharam os temas trazidos à discussão e que tipo de significados emergiram de suas produções, considerando a expansão do conhecimento linguístico e cultural; e como uma análise multimodal ajudou a compreender como os alunos percebem os diferentes domínios da vida abordados nas aulas. Os resultados mostraram que as aulas e os recursos multimodais refletiram os princípios da pedagogia dos multiletramentos, situando localmente e globalmente os textos apresentados em sala, e com o professor apoiando a leitura crítica das diferentes modalidades de linguagem, como vídeos, imagens e campanhas de conscientização. Com o auxílio de uma análise multimodal, foi possível observar que os alunos utilizaram alguns recursos semióticos em seus desenhos, como vetores, ferramentas narrativas (nuvens de pensamento) e saliência (cor e tamanho) para representar suas novas visões (des) construídas. Em suma, percebeu-se que as aulas contribuíram para desenvolver as habilidades linguísticas dos alunos, fomentar uma identidade empoderada entre os participantes e estimular a crença de que eles podem se tornar profissionais de sucesso no futuro, além de aprender a desempenhar qualquer trabalho existente, independentemente de cor, etnia ou contexto social.

**Palavras-chave:** Empoderamento. Ensino da língua inglesa. Multimodalidade. Pedagogia dos Multiletramentos.

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## INTRODUCTION

In the era of information, scholars have been querying how language educators have been assisting learners to make meaning, on one hand, of the burgeoning multiplicity of texts forms, semiosis and media currently available, and, on the other, of the cultural plurality and diversity emerging from novels, poems, videos, images and drawings (KRESS, 1997; COPE & KALANTZIS, 2000, 2009, ROJO, 2009, 2013). Despite such variety of texts, other scholars (HAWKINS; NORTON, 2009; KLEIMAN, 2016) have pointed out the inefficiency of schools to cater for the need of marginalized groups, such as underprivileged students, immigrants and refugees to have equal access to this array of meaning-making possibilities and to language and literacy education, which may allow their full and active participation in diverse social contexts as informed and conscious citizens.

In this sense, this study aims at investigating how English lessons designed in light of the pedagogy of multiliteracies (COPE; KALANTZIS, 2000, 2009), used multimodal texts (KRESS; van LEEUWEN, 2006; ALMEIDA, 2009; NASCIMENTO; BEZERRA; HEBERLE, 2011), both verbal and non-verbal, as tools to promote language learning, empowerment and active citizenship of underprivileged children and adolescents in a non-governmental Brazilian organization.

Our study took place in the context of a non-governmental organization (hereafter NGO) located in the outskirts of the capital city of Paraíba, João Pessoa, where underprivileged children and adolescents are given support and tools to fight for their rights together in an unequal society. There, not only do they learn how to use computers, work etiquette and are assisted with their school work, but they can also develop their physical and cognitive aptitudes, their multiple expressions are valued, and they can ‘sing, dance and paint their hearts out’. They have someone to speak to and assist them with their struggles. They make friends and develop a sense of community and belonging. They learn about respect, gentleness and support. They have that word of comfort and instruction, as well as that meal they may not find at home. For some, it is their second home. That is Casa Pequeno Davi (hereafter CPD).

This research arose from our effort to develop English lessons at CPD as part of three extension projects<sup>1</sup>, which were carried out from 2015 to 2017. Firstly, we prepared young adults to take part in the work market by teaching English for specific purposes (e.g. being waiters, receptionists or shop assistants). At the same time, aligned with the Casa's agenda, we attempted to raise awareness about social issues, such as child labour, racism, prejudice and inclusive education by working with TV campaigns, leaflets and infographics, for instance. Then, we considered adapting this first project to teach English to the CPD's children; however, not in a way they would fully master all the linguistic skills one develops when attending a language school. Instead, our goal was to show that, despite adversities, they could learn a foreign language and use it when taking part in different life contexts, that is, when performing their multifaceted identities as social beings, citizens and future workers in society.

After two years teaching young adults and children at the NGO, we felt more confident about the principles adopted to guide our pedagogical practices (such as the pedagogy of multiliteracies and critical literacy). So, the third-year project was intended to empower students by using language as a resource for building up their self-confidence and strengthening their identities as agents of their own future (ROJO, 2009; FERREIRA; MAIA, 2017).

For this purpose, two lessons were designed<sup>2</sup>. The first one was related to the black awareness day celebrated in Brazil on November 20<sup>th</sup>. With it, we intended to raise awareness about racism in the country and to build a strong identity in the participants, so that they felt proud of their cultural background and willing and able to stand up for their rights and act in the world as informed citizens (ROJO, 2009). In the second lesson, the focus was on the learners' future working lives. There, not only were some occupations in English presented, but also some of the attitudes and expected competences (COPE; KALANTZIS, 2000, 2009) of the new millennium worker were highlighted and encouraged, such as respect, initiative, teamwork and creativity.

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<sup>1</sup> By extension project we mean social and academic activities, which promote the production and democratization of knowledge, development and organization in society, thus contributing to the education of conscious citizens, aware of their rights and responsibilities in society. In the context of the undergraduate course Letras - Inglês, a group of teachers in initial education, supervised by the professors coordinating the projects, got involved in planning and teaching lessons in community centres or public schools, in an attempt to develop their teaching skills and strengthen the educational process of participating students.

<sup>2</sup> The project included the planning and development of 8 lessons at Casa Pequeno Davi. The two lessons analysed in this paper were chosen due to the social relevance of the topics covered and to the multimodal nature of the materials prepared.

In order to achieve those aims, we rested on some of the principles of literacy education (BARTON; HAMILTON, 2000; KRESS, 1997; PERRY, 2012) to design the lessons. According to these scholars, when teaching a person how to read and write, an educator must consider a series of factors intrinsic to this process. Among them, for example, it is suggested that a teacher should take into account the values, beliefs, norms and preconceptions of the context where the lessons occur, and the different settings where language is used, such as learners' personal, social and working lives. For this reason, we designed lessons that would cover these diverse domains, and which would allow participants to experience the English language in different contexts of their lives.

Furthermore, we relied on the framework proposed by the pedagogy of multiliteracies (COPE; KALANTZIS, 2000, 2009), which suggests some steps to be taken when planning a lesson. Firstly, it is recommended that teachers make use of texts that are available to the participants and which are meaningful and relevant in their lives. Thus, we made use of short stories featuring children proud of their cultural background, music and videos praising the similarities between specific groups of people or showing disabled teenagers being themselves while fulfilling their life dreams.

Additionally, the reading of these texts should be scaffolded, with the educator drawing students' attention to form (metalinguage, textual genre, spatial layout, colour and others), and explaining how the choices made when writing a text create meaning (COPE; KALANTZIS, 2000). For example, in the texts used in this research, the teacher elicited the characters' occupations by exploring the colours in their clothes. In another situation, he explained the word order in English and how it differs from the participants' first language (e.g. adjectives before nouns).

A further consideration involves critically reflecting on how meaning is made and how the texts relate to their social contexts. Some questions may arise from this critical stage concerning the author's intention with that production and to whom it is addressed (DOURADO; MEDRADO, 2015). In the context of our research, the texts served the purpose of raising awareness about social issues which were present in their contexts, such as racism and inequality.

Finally, it is suggested that teachers should propose activities that allow learners to apply what they have learned in creative ways. According to Cope and Kalantzis (2000), these productions may depict their real understanding of the texts to which they were exposed in class and, perhaps, a (de) constructed perspective of the world, one in which their life experiences, combined with the new acquired information, can represent

their reality and their new transformed *self*. Hence, for this study, students were asked to make posters for an awareness campaign and to draw themselves as future workers.

In the materials prepared for the lessons, a great quantity of images, videos and drawings were used to convey meaning and to represent reality in different forms. Students were asked to express their understanding of the lessons and their positioning about the discussed socially relevant themes through drawings, which, *per se*, carry a lot of meaning that demand an organized system to be analysed. Thus, considering that meaning can also be made through other modes of communication, such as images, gesture, gaze and drawings, we relied on the social semiotic perspective of multimodal analysis (KRESS; van LEEUWEN, 2006; ALMEIDA, 2009; NASCIMENTO; BEZERRA; HEBERLE, 2011) to scrutinise the meanings made in the participants' drawings.

In terms of methodological procedures, we carried out a qualitative and interpretative analysis (ALVES, 2014; BORTONI-RICARDO, 2008) of two (02) lessons designed for the extension project *Teaching English and French to children and adolescents at NGOs: widening cultural horizons and promoting citizenship* to a group of about fifteen (15) students attending ludic-pedagogical activities at Casa Pequeno Davi. We applied this qualitative and interpretative approach because it accounts for participants' beliefs, perceptions, feelings and values and allows a holistic interpretation of the social phenomena inserted in a context (BORTONI-RICARDO, 2008). The *corpus* of this study encompasses lesson plans, materials (handouts, videos, images, etc), videos and photos taken during the two lessons, as well as learners' productions, such as their drawings, written texts and utterances<sup>3</sup>.

Taking this into account, this research intends to answer the following questions:

- To what extent did the lessons developed with the aid of the multimodal resources, such as videos, slides, images and handouts embrace the tenets of the pedagogy of multiliteracies and the participants' needs? Were the phases of pedagogical action proposed by that framework adopted, and if so, how?
- How were the socially relevant themes discussed in each class redesigned by students and what kind of meanings emerged from their productions, considering the expansion of linguistic and cultural knowledge?

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<sup>3</sup> The use of this material was allowed by the direction of Casa Pequeno Davi, and the term of consent is in the annex of the paper.



- How did a multimodal analysis of the redesigned productions assist in understanding how students perceive the different domains of life approached in the lessons?

This study is divided in five parts: introduction, three chapters and final considerations. In the first chapter, we explain the theoretical principles which underpinned our research and the categories which will be investigated through the materials designed for the lessons and through students' final productions. The first subtopic defines literacy and opens the path to the second subtopic, the pedagogy of multiliteracies, which serves as a main reference to this study. A third subtopic encompasses the notions of multimodality, which allowed us to identify the meaning-making resources in the drawings produced by participants and which represented their views on the different domains of their social lives.

In the second chapter, we describe aspects of the research, such as context, participants, lesson plans, materials and analysis procedures which we undertook to investigate the generated data. The third chapter includes data analysis. It is divided in two parts. Firstly, we analyse the lesson about the black awareness day in Brazil, its materials and learners' productions, in an attempt to identify how it contributed to foster an empowered identity among participants. Later, we look into the lesson that deals with the realm of working life and which had the aim to encourage the belief that those children could learn to perform whatever job they wanted and were able to do in the future, regardless of colour, ethnic or social background. As a conclusion, we discuss findings by reference to the proposed questions for this study and unveil possibilities for future research in this field.

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **LITERACY, PEDAGOGY OF MULTILITERACIES AND MULTIMODALITY**

In this chapter, we discuss some theoretical aspects that underpin this research. In 1.1) we present the tenets of literacy (KRESS, 1997; BARTON; HAMILTON, 2000; PERRY, 2012), followed by 1.2) the pedagogy of multiliteracies (COPE; KALANTZIS, 2000, 2009), whose framework will be applied in our analysis and, finally, 1.3) the principles of multimodality (KRESS; VAN LEEUWEN, 2006; JEWITT, 2009; NASCIMENTO; BEZERRA; HEBERLE, 2011; ALMEIDA, 2012), which allowed us to analyse learners' productions in terms of semiotic resources used to convey meaning and represent reality.

#### **1.1. What's literacy?**

Literacy can be defined as the medium of communication empowered by language<sup>4</sup> that allows us to tackle our everyday tasks while in society (KRESS, 1997). Barton and Hamilton (2000) add to this view and, from a sociocultural perspective, define literacy as a set of social practices situated in contexts that are shaped by the interactions among citizens, and which are mediated by texts.

In order to clarify the concept, Barton and Hamilton (2000) offer some additional propositions to define literacy. However, it is important to distinguish between the notions of literacy events and literacy practice first, due to their reoccurrence and relevance in many studies in this field. Perry (2012) explains that while the former relates to observable texts mediated by written or spoken language, the latter is not observable and can only be inferred, since it involves values, attitudes, feelings and social relationships that vary depending on the context they are set.

Having said that, Duboc (2015) explains the first proposition put forward by Barton and Hamilton (2000). She says that literacy practices are socially and culturally constructed and that the process of reading a text (any literacy event) is deeply influenced

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<sup>4</sup> In this study, language is conceived as a system of signs that is constructed in the social world and is shaped by various cultural contexts. Therefore, it is our understanding that language is not just as code, a combination of signs to be deciphered, but a social practice (PERRY, 2012).

by norms and preconceptions built along history. These aspects will eventually influence the written texts or utterances one produces within his community.

A further argument states that “there are different literacies associated with different domains of life” (BARTON; HAMILTON, 2000, p.11). For instance, when writing for the academia or giving a lecture, there is a set of rules and norms one has to follow to accomplish the task; the work etiquette has already been pre-set long before you start working for company A or B. In other words, there is not only one way of writing or reading, considering that we use language in various domains and for a variety of purposes in /of our lives. Also, it is noteworthy that these practices involve different media of symbolic systems (BARTON; HAMILTON, 2000). In this sense, we can say that there are literacies related to films, computers, images and other multisemioses.

However, a question may arise from the events aforementioned: Who set these standards of writing academically or the work etiquette one has to follow? The answer lies on socially powerful institutions, such as family, religion and education. While some of the norms imposed are explicit (e.g. ABNT<sup>5</sup> norms for academic writing), others are sustained by social conventions, based on the premise that, to be a social being, your demeanour has to follow the set of rules accordingly. Hence, it is said that “literacy practices are patterned by social institutions and power relationships, and some literacies are more dominant, visible and influential than others” (BARTON; HAMILTON, 2000, p.12).

Moreover, literacy practices are said to be “purposeful and embedded in broader social goals and cultural practices” (BARTON; HAMILTON, 2000, p.12). That is, learning to read and write should mean more than having high scores in reading comprehension tasks or writing a good composition for the university entry exams. Children should be instructed to see purpose for learning beyond the four walls of their classrooms and going to school should be relevant and not just another imposition of a powerful institution.

Finally, the authors argue that literacy practices are historically situated and they may change along time or transform into new ones, which are acquired from formal or informal education and instruction (BARTON; HAMILTON, 2000). That is, the literacy practices we currently have in society are rooted in the past, either influenced by dominant institutions that remain in power (e.g. church) or by our ancestors and even by ourselves.

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<sup>5</sup> Abbreviation for Associação Brasileira de Normas e Técnicas

In other words, literacy practices follow the course of human nature. This path is fluid, dynamic and may change according to the people and societies they are part of. As time progresses, human kind is in constant transformation and, thus, literacy practices are also constantly evolving, since they are an inherent part of our lives in society.

Based on the studies developed by Street (1984) and on his concern about how literacy was treated at the time, two major sociocultural models of literacy emerged. The first, autonomous, treats literacy as a cognitive ability that resides in individuals and which can be measured according to one's ability to deal with the written text. This perspective is infiltrated in our education system, with teachers preparing students for exams without any purpose else than decoding the language presented in a task or course book text. Despite technological advances and multimodal resources available, students are still given a list of vocabulary words about sports or daily routine to memorize and eventually find them in school exams<sup>6</sup>.

In contrast, the ideological model conceives literacy as a set of practices (as opposed to skills) that treat the institutions, the texts and subjects heterogeneously, according to the social contexts they are immersed in. The readers are led to reflect on who the writers and subjects of a text are, why it has been written, to whom it is addressed, and the impact of the message in a specific sociocultural and historical context. Instead of just memorizing, according to this model, through formal and informal instruction, learners become more aware, more informed and able to understand power relations and social differences in their communities. According to Perry (2012, p. 62)

Conceptualizing literacy as something one does, as opposed to a skill or ability one has, helps us understand the real-world ways in which real people actually engage with real texts, which ultimately could help educators make formal literacy instruction more meaningful and relevant for learners.

This model confronts the idea that literates and illiterates coexist and the one able to read and write in the dominant literacy practice is in power, whereas the others are deprived and unworthy. Instead, seeing literacy as something one does and that varies according to the context allows us to see that those considered illiterate may be able to read, write and engage with literacy events that are meaningful to them in other situations.

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<sup>6</sup> Practices like that were observed during my internship (teaching practicum) in a public school in João Pessoa and are often mentioned in articles describing English Language Teaching (ELT) in public schools in Brazil (LIMA, 2011).

Freire (2001, p. 86 *apud* PERRY, 2012, p. 60) advocates the ideological model and states that,

To acquire literacy is more than to psychologically and mechanically dominate reading and writing techniques. It is to dominate these techniques in terms of consciousness [...] Acquiring literacy does not involve memorizing sentences, words, or syllables – lifeless objects unconnected to an existential universe – but rather an attitude of creation and re-creation, a self-transformation producing a stance of intervention in one's context.

Also, it is our understanding that our role as educators is to teach the word and the world (FREIRE, 2001), instructing students to read and write the various texts, verbal and non-verbal, available in society. In addition to that, we should raise awareness about the power relations and inequalities underlying these pieces of writing to prepare learners to confront these ideas as active citizens.

Adding to Street's theoretical framework (1984), another theory was developed in the new millennium, which was concerned with the multiplicity of channels one has as a mean to access information besides the printed word. Teaching students to read and write books, poems, and articles was not enough to tackle the task of preparing them to be engaged citizens, especially with the advent of technology. In this way, a pedagogy of multiliteracies (COPE; KALANTZIS, 2000) arises and proposes a new definition of what should be conceived as text, adding a variety of modes of language and semiotic systems to this concept.

## **1.2. Pedagogy of Multiliteracies: the design of social futures**

The term 'pedagogy of multiliteracies' was coined in 1996 by a group of ten scholars named the New London Group, who showed great concern about the changes in meaning making related to the three realms of our social lives (working lives, citizenship and lifeworlds). Among the changes, it became evident that the advent of technology and digital media in the new millennium shed light on literacy practices previously neglected. Cope and Kalantzis (2000, p.9) stated that

First, we want to extend the idea and scope of literacy pedagogy to account for the context of our culturally and linguistically diverse and increasingly globalised societies; to account for the multifarious cultures that interrelate and the plurality of texts that circulate. Second, we argue that literacy pedagogy now must account for the burgeoning variety of text forms associated with information and multimedia technologies.

Thus, we agree with Kress (1997) on the fact that school curricula should place emphasis on other forms of meaning making in addition to verbal language. Toys, painting and drawing should be regarded not just as forms of expressions but also as means of communication, through which learners may be “the actors of their own knowledge processes and able to design the representation they make of the world surrounding them in any medium that is to hand” (KRESS, 1997, p.8). The author, thus, puts forward the idea that any text is always multimodal. That is, when one uses language to communicate, a combination of modes<sup>7</sup> is used so that the interlocutor can make sense of the message. In social practices, the subject has an active role when deciding on the most appropriate mode to produce meanings, and which will allow better communication. In formal education, however, the written language is dominant and, as soon as learners master the alphabetic literacy, they are encouraged to represent their minds through words, leaving behind the array of semiotic possibilities available.

Apart from redefining the concept of text, the New London Group also explained the reasons for a pedagogy of multiliteracies, in view of the emergence of new literacies, embodied in the transformed configurations of our lifeworlds, citizenship and working lives. Cope and Kalantzis (2009, p.167) elucidate that the group strongly believed that “education provides access to material resources in the form of better paid employment; it affords an enhanced capacity to participate in civic life; and it promises personal growth”. On top of that, they also argued that the response to inequality was in schooling, and that, “through education, people can become anything they like and succeed on their own terms – if they have the will and the “ability”, that is.”

In terms of personal lives, it is said that education should promote an integrated view of the multiple lifeworlds in the diverse communities we are part of. Also, it should assist learners in becoming more aware of and open to differences in society, such as gender, ethnicity, generation and sexual orientation (COPE; KALANTZIS, 2000). Furthermore, it should deal with the increasing range of subcultural options available in “the interwoven narratives and commodities that cross television, toys, fast-food packaging, video games, T-shirts, shoes, bed linen, pencil cases, and lunch boxes” (LUKE, 1995 *apud* COPE; KALANTZIS, 2000, p.16) that were once obfuscated by the

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<sup>7</sup> According to Jewitt (2009), mode, in a social semiotic perspective, is defined as any communicative resource (space, gesture, gaze, body posture and movement, sound, voice and music, image, mathematical symbolism, written and spoken language, and three-dimensional objects, such as tables) that is shaped and construed by social, cultural and historical factors.

concept of a singular, common national culture. Ultimately, a pedagogy of multiliteracies intends

[...]to make space available so that different lifeworlds can flourish; to create spaces for community life where local and specific meanings can be made. The new multimedia and hypermedia channels can and sometimes do provide members of subcultures with the opportunity to find their own voices (COPE; KALANTZIS, 2000, p. 16).

As for the changes in our public lives, the same authors argue that schools should leave behind the reduced and shrunk role of literacy as mere recodification of signs (alphabetic literacy, numeracy) influenced by the ideology of neoliberalism<sup>8</sup> to assume the position of an institution that “promotes active citizenship, centred on learners as agents in their own knowledge processes, capable of contributing their own as well as negotiating the differences between one community and the next” (COPE; KALANTZIS, 2009, p.172).

Finally, a pedagogy of multiliteracies should respond to the changes in our working lives (shaped by the dynamics of contemporary capitalism) by promoting a culture of flexibility, creativity, innovation and initiative (COPE; KALANTZIS, 2009). To do this, schools should foster horizontal relationships of teamwork and promote the worker identity as of someone who is multiskilled and flexible to do complex and integrated work (COPE; KALANTZIS, 2000). Last but not least, to put these strategies in practice, literacy serves a greater purpose than simply supplying learners with the traditional basics of reading and writing the national language. As Cope and Kalantzis (2009, p.170) explain,

[...] in the new economy workplace, it [literacy] is a set of supply, variable, communication strategies, ever-diverging according to the cultures and social languages of technologies, functional groups, types of organization and niche clienteles.

Kleiman (2016) also advocates a pedagogy of multiliteracies and argues that it comes to assist active learners with strategies to respond to the demands of their social contexts (work, personal life and citizenship) and with the development of their capacity to (de) construct meaning of multimodal texts in an ever more semiotic world. The author

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<sup>8</sup> In schools, the concept of small state put forward by this ideology takes the form of reduced state funding, teachers as self-regulating professionals, and schools that are run as businesses and private institutions for-profit (COPE; KALANTZIS, 2009).

agrees with Barton and Hamilton (2000), who argue that this teaching-learning perspective challenges literacy practices patterned by social institutions and power relationships and makes the voices of underprivileged groups such as indigenous people and immigrants, who do not speak the national language, heard. It may as well help these groups build on their confidence and hold on to their beliefs and concepts of living through a variety of modes of communication, and not just with the aid of a dominant practice, which, as known, is deeply influenced by power relations.

In order to deal with the multiplicity of texts, Cope and Kalantzis (2000, 2009) propose a metalanguage of Multiliteracies based on the concept of Design. According to the authors, all the semiotic modes available to produce or consume texts, such as the printed word, films, photography, gesture and others are conceived as Available Designs. They have their own grammars of language and are structured through a set of conventions (e.g. register, style, genre) in a given social context. The Designing occurs, with language teachers scaffolding the learning, when students make meaning of the semiotic systems<sup>9</sup> and transform them by reading, seeing, listening and creating new representations of reality. The outcome of designing is the Redesigned, the new transformed meaning. In addition, Cope and Kalantzis (2000, p.23) explain that “the Redesigned becomes a new Available Design, a new meaning-making resource”. Finally, the same authors state that these processes of design reconstruct and renegotiate meaning-makers’ identities.

Taking all this into account, Cope and Kalantzis (2000) explain how it is possible to develop a pedagogy of multiliteracies by proposing a framework<sup>10</sup>, a guideline that explains some aspects put forward by their approach. According to the authors, learning should happen as a Situated Practice, drawing on learners’ background experiences of meaning from local and global context, which means that students should learn a language with the aim of making actual use of it in their routines.

Duboc (2015) argues that educators should also draw learners’ attention to the textual genres presented by asking a set of questions that generate discussion and engage the readers in unravelling the text. Dourado and Medrado (2015) suggest questions aimed at learning about the main idea of the text, its writers, its intentions, to whom it is

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<sup>9</sup> This meaning-making process involves ideational (power relations embedded in the meaning), interpersonal (how meaning connects the people involved in the interaction) and textual (e.g. register, style, genre) functions of the semiotic system (ROJO, 2013).

<sup>10</sup> It is not intended to be a rigid learning sequence. It aims at providing ideas and different perspectives to assist teachers in their practices (COPE; KALANTZIS, 2005).



addressed, where it can be found, among others. They argue that, by doing this, students are encouraged to demonstrate how much they know about the textual genre on focus and their background knowledge is activated.

Also, it is indicated that some work on metalanguage should be carried out. In the phase of the lesson described as Overt Instruction (COPE; KALANTZIS, 2000), students are led to understand how form (linguistic, spatial, colour, visual, etc) create meaning. This is a crucial moment for designing an authentic understanding or production of a text. By becoming aware of the grammatical, linguistic and semiotic systems that underlie language or any semiotic mode, learners become more independent readers and able to “transform knowledge by producing new constructions and representations of reality” (COPE; KALANTZIS, 2000, p.22). Learners become aware of aspects such as semantic knowledge (nouns, adjectives, verbs, etc), pragmatic knowledge (beliefs, values and expectations from a given context) and register (the style of language, grammar, and words used for particular situations and textual genres) that will allow them to transform the material available into something new and more meaningful to them.

Additionally, Hawkins & Norton (2009, p.31) recommend socially relevant themes to be dealt in class with a critical eye, especially with groups who lack school success and fairly participate in their classrooms and communities. Critical, as claimed by them, “refers to a focus on how dominant ideologies in society drive the construction of understanding and meaning in ways that privilege certain groups of people, while marginalizing others.” The same authors continue the discussion on adopting a critical approach and state that,

Rather than have learners internalize such meaning as normal and right, critical language teachers work with their students to deconstruct language, texts, and discourses, in order to investigate whose interests they serve and what messages are both explicitly and implicitly conveyed (HAWKINS; NORTON, 2009, p.32).

This critical reading relates to the phase of the lesson called Critical Framing by Cope and Kalantzis (2000, 2005, 2009). It is decisive and should be mediated by the language teacher, who plays a key role in informing, in building an understanding of values and practices shaped by relationships. In fact, interaction is a key concept for the fourth stage of the lesson suggested by Cope and Kalantzis’ framework, Transformative Practice, which consists of activities that allow learners to apply what they have learnt and to redesign actively the meaning of the text in a way that best suits them.

As a matter of fact, Freire (1974) argues that it is only through interaction and dialogic engagement, in which both parts learn about each other's experiences and world views, that teachers and learners can transform themselves and redesign the meaning they construct from literacy practices, thus becoming new beings. However, in transformed practice, we will not be able to see those changes instantaneously; the learner may not behave differently immediately after the pedagogical experience. However, his or her way of thinking may change and that may be reflected on the productions of those learners at the end of the pedagogical process, on texts designed with verbal and non-verbal elements, such as the ones that are part of this research data. At this moment of redesigning what was to hand, Cope and Kalantzis (2000, p. 35) suggest that "learners should be able to show that they can implement understanding acquired through Overt Instruction and Critical Framing in practices that help them simultaneously to apply and revise what they have learned".

### **1.3. Multimodality: multiple ways to see the world**

From the introductory chapter of this study, we have been arguing that images, drawings and childish imaginative creations are more than the simple expression of feelings or desires of children and should not be neglected, especially when we consider the world they live in and the array of modes available in society which may allow representations of reality.

As Early, Kendrick and Potts (2015) explain, the way language and discourse were once conceived has suffered a shift with the prominence of nonlinguistic modes (image, gaze, gesture, movement, music, speech and sound-effect) in social interactions, with language being one of the communicative resources we have to hand to (re) make meaning. Based on their research with both privileged and disadvantaged learners, they claim that the full range of semiotic resources (including digital technologies) used within a community and/or society may potentially support English language learning and teaching for the current generation. Among the studies on this topic, the same authors mention research on the impact of these multiple modal affordances on students' meaning making processes; cultural and linguistic diversity in multimodal texts; issues of privilege, social justice, and educational equality; how nonlinguistic modes enabled understanding of difficult knowledge in health education; among others.

In terms of literacy education, Early, Kendrick and Potts (2015, p.452) argue that multimodality, rooted in social semiotics, can play a key role in dealing with language as social practice. That is, “multimodal lens can improve our capacity to create pedagogic designs for language learning” that encompass “the larger patterns of doing, thinking and learning that inform our understanding of appropriateness, norms and acceptability”. Furthermore, they state that, not only can a multimodal orientation to meaning making raise questions about patterns of language privilege and dominant discourses, it also casts doubt on conservative concepts of texts, and reinforces the need to simultaneously keep one eye focused on the basics (speech and written form) and the other on the array of meaning-making resources learners bring to class.

As a way to discuss how these other modal resources might contribute to the meaning making process, we rely on the concept of multimodality, which is a perspective that considers non-verbal modes of communication, such as images and drawings as having meaning potential<sup>11</sup> in society. According to Jewitt (2009), there are four theoretical assumptions that support this perspective.

First, the author points out that multimodality encompasses these other forms of communication and representation, such as gesture, gaze and posture. This means that “communication always draws on a multiplicity of modes, all of which have the potential to contribute equally to meaning” (JEWITT, 2009, p.14). By this, she reinforces that we make sense of the world through multiple forms, not only through speech and writing.

As speech and writing are not the only designs available to make meaning, a second assumption underpinning the tenets of multimodality outlines the synaesthesia with which we experience the world. Synaesthesia refers to the interweaving of meanings made through the interaction of modes which are co-present and co-operative in a communicative event (JEWITT, 2009). However, Kress (1997) argues that, albeit modes feature in communicative events simultaneously in some circumstances, most often, one mode prevails over others. This, though, does not mean that the dominant mode should be given priority and the others neglected. In an era of information, one must have to hand every mode and possibility to make sense, whether relying on verbal language or other semiotic modes, such as images.

Jordão (2010) puts forward a further argument when she suggests that this interweaving of designs (modes) is a key factor to resist totalitarian discourses and create

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<sup>11</sup> Meaning potential refers to the materials, the cultural aspects of modes and what is possible to express and represent with a mode (JEWITT, 2009).

possibilities of articulation of new meaning. That is, this hybridism of meaning making casts doubt on the black and white view of being literate or not and allows one to see that, instead of emphasizing one design or undermining another, the co-existence and co-operation between modes may, in fact, facilitate the meaning making process. Also, the relationships of power in terms of having access to one mode or another is challenged, which opens doors to a more inclusive and democratic perspective, one which states that the interweaving of modes amplifies our chances to understand ourselves and the others.

Studies developed by Dantas (2014) that describe multimodal ELT<sup>12</sup> lessons addressed to visually impaired students, who are unable to perceive the world through reading or writing the printed word, serve as an example of the perspective change above-mentioned, towards a more inclusive educational approach. At some point in time, this impairment could impede the learning of a new language, either due to the lack of material designed for these students' specific needs or because our educational system is unprepared to deal with the matter. However, using recycled material and computer applications, a vast range of tactile, audio and kinaesthetic resources were developed, and together, helped the work with many aspects of language, once thought to be only approached with the aid of the printed word. Therefore, it is possible to see that learners, regardless of where they come from or their learning obstacles, may benefit from a lesson that includes multimodal resources and have the chance to better express themselves if other mode is available.

Additionally, this multimodal perspective of meaning making assumes that cognition is empowered by a repertoire of modes which do not necessarily need verbal language to be interpreted. Kress (1997, p.39) argues that all modes allow reasoning and understanding. Thus, "written language enables one form of cognition; drawing another; colour as a medium another; the production of physical objects and their interactive use yet others." In other words, these forms of representation leave behind their illustrative purposes and assume an equivalent role of social practice. So, as well as speech and writing, images and other non-linguistic modes are unstable, dynamic, fluid and situated. As Jewitt (2009, p.15) explains, they are constituted by and within the social, and "have been shaped through their cultural, historical and social uses to realize social functions".

Taking this into account, it is our understanding that this assumption (that cognition is empowered by a repertoire of modes) can contribute to an effective learning

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<sup>12</sup> Stands for English Language Teaching.

and the shaping of learners' identities. Multimodality accounts for the multiple ways one has to hand to conceive the world. Either considering the theories of multiple intelligences (GARDNER, 1983) or the sensory learning preferences, it is clear that allowing other forms of communication and representation in class has considerable impact on learning. Students can rely on the modes that are more significant to them to make sense of the texts they are being presented more naturally. This choice is made based on their sociocultural background and experiences that have influenced their conception of the world.

However, this decision is not arbitrary. It is, instead, situated and most often shaped by norms and rules predominant in a specific social context (JEWITT, 2009). As Hawkins and Norton (2009, p.31) state, "our ideas, interactions, language use, texts, learning practices, and so forth, are not neutral and objective, but are shaped by and within social relationships that systematically advantage some people over others, thus producing and reproducing inequitable relationships of power in society". Consequently, it comes as no surprise the dominance of a linguistic design in our society. These relationships of power can be represented in terms of the amount of money a family unit earns, the clothes one wears or even the sort of music one listens to. Yet, when it comes to schooling, there are privileged learners, who have unfettered access to education and those who are considered illiterate, unable to read or write the national language.

From this point on, it is now clear that meaning can be made through other modes of communication, such as images, gesture or gaze, which are also shaped by and within sociocultural contexts; that they carry meaning without the need of verbal language to interpret their representations of reality; and that the hybridism of modal resources can generate new meaning and challenge dominant discourses. Also, as it happens with verbal language, there is the need of a functional system that can be used to interpret the signs produced in these modes.

Hence, for this study, we consider the social semiotic perspective of multimodality (KRESS; VAN LEEUWEN, 2001 *apud* JEWITT, 2009). To understand the aims of this approach, influenced by the theories of social semiotics and Systemic-Functional Grammar (HALLIDAY, 1994 *apud* ALMEIDA, 2009), first, one must bear in mind that both language and other semiosis are defined as a system of signs. By sign we mean a combination of meaning and form (KRESS, 1997). Also, within the scope of this perspective, these signs have a social function and are used as resources to represent aspects of reality. Jewitt (2009) argues that they are always socially located and regulated,

whether in terms of whom they are available to and the discourses that control how these signs are used by people to represent the world. Thus, a social semiotic perspective of multimodality is an approach that analyses a system of signs conceived and transformed by and within social interactions, which serves a specific function, depending on the context it is inserted in.

For the analysis, there are some core concepts which ought to be clarified, such as mode, semiotic resource, meaning potential and metafunctions.

### **1.3.1. Mode**

First, mode, as aforementioned, refers to any form of communication that is used in social interactions to make meaning, thus being shaped and influenced by the context where it is placed. It is noteworthy that modes, as well as language, are, for the social influence they are under, fluid, dynamic and unstable. They are not static skill replication and use. As Jewitt (2009, p.22) explains “[...] modes are constantly transformed by their users in response to the communicative needs of communities, institutions and societies; new modes are created, and existing modes are transformed”.

### **1.3.2. Semiotic resources**

Within these modes, there are semiotic resources which can help to get the message across. Whereas in Halliday’s framework (1994), lexical-grammatical choices are made for such matter, in visual semiotics, for example, the resources can be described as actions, materials or artefacts used for communicative purpose and which have a meaning potential in social contexts (JEWITT, 2009).

### **1.3.3. Meaning potential**

By meaning potential we mean the possibilities some resources have to express and represent aspects of reality in one society or another. For instance, a hand gesture is the mode and the configuration of one’s fingers is the semiotic resource. This setting has a meaning potential and may make some sense in a country and convey a completely different idea, perhaps carrying a negative connotation, in another country.

### 1.3.4. Metafunctions

A fourth core concept of a multimodality analysis are the metafunctions. According to Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006), the Grammar of Visual Design intends to explain how images, gestures, gaze, colour, framing and other semiotic resources construct representations of reality, define roles, establish relations between the participants (representational function), as well as between these and the reader (interactional function), and assign values according to the position, framing and salience of the elements in the text (compositional function). However, while analysing metafunctions, we do not intend to merely focus on the semiotic resources themselves, but the meanings originated from their use in various contexts. This analysis allows us to learn more about students' backgrounds and identities, how their literacy practices at home relate to those proposed in class and, perhaps, it may serve the purpose of building a pathway to a more meaningful and effective teaching.

Almeida (2009) explains that the representational function refers to the relationship between the participants and how they (people, places and things) are represented in a semiotic mode. It encompasses narrative and conceptual representations.

According to Nascimento, Bezerra and Heberle (2011), narrative representations construct the experience as an event that happens in space and time. There, participants may be interacting, either speaking, thinking or looking at a specific direction, which is determined by the presence of speech bubbles, thinking balloons or vectors. These correspond to the category of verbs that describe action or state in a linguistic mode. In conceptual representations, participants may be described and / or classified in terms of their individual characteristics, evidencing their identity, or shared traits with other participants, which allow us to perceive them as members of a group. In Table 1, the authors outline a few characteristics that describe these representations.

**Table 1: Main Characteristics: Narrative and Conceptual Representations**

<b>Narrative Representation</b>	Presence of participants (humans or not) involved in the event;	Presence of vectors indicating actions (eye contact, direction of hands and arms, or other elements indicating movement/direction);	Background suggesting circumstances of the events (space and time);	-
<b>Conceptual Representation</b>	Organization of participants in implicit or explicit taxonomies/categories.	Portrayal of participants in a part-whole structure;	Absence of vectors;	Absence of (or less detailed) background (focus on participants and their attributes)

Source: NASCIMENTO; BEZERRA; HEBERLE, 2011

These representations are still subcategorized in different processes. While for narrative processes the categories indicate action, reaction, mental or verbal processes, the conceptual processes are divided in classificational, analytical and symbolic.

- a. Narrative Representation: Almeida (2009, p. 179; my translation) states that “this process represents the visual participants in action, in terms of dynamic events”. They can be divided in four subgroups:
  - a. Actional process: a transactional process is indicated by the presence of at least two participants and vectors (unidirectional or bidirectional). However, if there is only one participant and a vector, this is a non-transactional process. For instance, a picture of a girl combing her own hair represents a non-transactional process. Whereas a video of a couple of capoeira contestants fighting depicts a bidirectional transactional process.
  - b. Reactional process: it follows the same subdivision as the actional (transactional or non-transactional) and it refers to the reaction of one or more human or human-like participant to an event. This is perceived by the presence of a vector formed by the eyeline of a participant. For example, a picture of spectators seeing a play taken from the stage would describe a reactional process, as it would depict their reaction to the actors and actresses’ performance.
  - c. Mental or verbal: Processes indicated by the presence of a speech or thinking bubble, respectively, connected to a human or human-like



participant. As example, in comic strips, the characters' lines of thoughts are placed in these bubbles.

- b. Conceptual Representation: Almeida (2009) explains that this representation differs from the narrative one for the presence of static participants who are not necessarily engaged in (re) actional processes. They can be represented in three different processes:
  - a. Classificational: when the image or any other semiotic mode presents a visual structure able to symmetrically organize the people, places or objects to show how similar they are or that they belong to the same category. When the relation between subordinate and superordinate participants can be identified, the taxonomy is considered overt. If not, it is named covert. For example, a photo of the president and his or her ministers, in which the chief in command is in the centre and his or her subordinates aside, represents an overt classificational process. Whereas the image of a school staff, in which it is not possible to identify who the coordinators or directors are, since they all wear the same clothes as the other employees, depicts a covert classificational process.
  - b. Analytical: when the represented participant is defined by the focus given on its parts, if the whole subject is shown, the process is considered attributive. However, when only the parts are seen, the process is considered inclusive. For instance, when the image focus on the turbines of an aeroplane to describe its power, if the plane can be seen, this is an attributive process. However, if only the engines are shown, it is considered an inclusive process.
  - c. Symbolical: when attributes of the represented participant or other semiotic resources are emphasized in terms of colour, size, positioning, illumination in order to construct meaning. Nascimento, Bezerra and Heberle (2011, p. 539; my translation) explain that this is “an effect that adds symbolism to representation, just like the effect of using metaphors and analogies in verbal language”. An example to describe this process could be most awareness campaigns against racial prejudice, mainly against Afro-ascendants. It is possible to see the focus on some of the participants' physical traits, such as their hair,

nose or colour. We believe that this emphasis on these elements construct their visual identity.

In a multimodal analysis, there is also the interactive function. According to Almeida (2009), it is also possible to see how the represented participants in the images or other modes interact with the reader or viewer. This relationship can be personal or impersonal, depending on aspects such as: a) the participant's eye contact with the viewer (distance); b) how related the viewer is to the participant (social distance); and c) the perspective or viewpoint (attitude and power). We are not going to explore this metafunction, as it is not so relevant in our data, as a first glance at the visual texts has shown.

Finally, Nascimento, Bezerra and Heberle (2011) explain that the compositional function describes how the organization of semiotic resources contributes to the meaning making process. It is noteworthy that the sociosemiotic multimodal analysis (KRESS; VAN LEEUWEN, 2006) here described considers western cultures and their literacy events. Thus, some of the aspects described in this section may only make sense to those familiar with this western disposition of elements in a multimodal text. According to the authors, there are three aspects that influence the construction of meaning:

- a) Information Value: values may be attributed to an element depending on its disposition in a page. The counterparts are a. left/right, b. top/bottom, c. centre/margin.
  - a. Left/right: In an image, the information on the left is the one already known, whereas the piece on the right carries new data. E.g.: The photo of a house before and after being remodelled.
  - b. Top/bottom: At the top of the image, one finds the ideal, the expected piece of information, whereas at the bottom, reality is portrayed. E.g.: at the top there is an image of a sunny welcoming day on the beach and, at the bottom, a pile of books and a research paper to be finished. These images could represent what a student might expect for his weekend and his actual reality.
  - c. Centre/Margin: In the middle of the image one finds the essential information to make meaning of the whole, whereas, in the margins, one finds the accessory parts that induce understanding. E.g.: a flyer where what is being advertised is placed in the middle and extra

information such as price, address and a more detailed description surround the item.

- b) Framing: This resource can connect, segregate or separate the elements of an image. These frames may influence the meaning making process. E.g.: In graphic analysis, framing places a significant role while describing the convergence or not between the elements grouped.
- c) Salience: It encompasses the strategies used to give emphasis to the elements that compose an image, thus attracting the viewer's attention. Among those, size, colour, contrast and placement in the foreground or background. For instance, snack bars and fast food places tend to use the red colour to attract clients, while chemists' use green or blue. The oversized elements in a flyer are also examples of how salience may contribute to the meaning making process.

In sum, this chapter served the purpose of outlining the main theoretical principles that underpin this research. Among others, the lessons here analysed considered the concept of literacy as a set of social practices that are shaped by dominant institutions within a specific context that allows interaction between citizens. Also, while planning, we considered the framework proposed by the pedagogy of multiliteracies, which suggests the adoption of various modes of communication (verbal and non-verbal) to develop linguistic skills and citizenship. Furthermore, we rely on the principles of a social semiotic multimodal analysis to understand the meanings created by the use of semiotic resources in both the materials designed for the lessons and the participants' productions along the study. Having explained the theory behind our study, in the following chapter, we describe the methodology that we applied to analyse the data generated.

## CHAPTER 2

### RESEARCH ASPECTS

In this chapter, we present the methodological aspects that guided this research. It is divided in four subtopics: i) Nature of the research; ii) The research context; iii) Data generation; and iv) Analysis procedures.

#### 2.1. Nature of the research

This research follows a qualitative and interpretative methodological approach. According to Alves (2014), a qualitative study accounts for both objective and subjective data, that is, beliefs, perceptions, feelings and values are also crucial to the development of the study. It takes a holistic perspective of the events observed, with the researcher describing the context, its participants and how their relationship adds to the hypothesis.

Bortoni-Ricardo (2008, p. 34, my translation) adds to this view and explains that “qualitative research does not aim at testing the relations of cause and consequence of events”, or perhaps at generalizing the practices that take place in the context given. Instead, “qualitative research tries to understand, to interpret social phenomena inserted in a context”. In other words, it implies that humans’ actions, perspectives, backgrounds and beliefs never happen in a social vacuum. In this sense, Rojo (2009) clarifies that the meanings emerging from our interactions and the texts we read or produce are all socially contextualized, and, therefore, the values, political projects, culture and history of a given place are relevant and should be considered in the analysis of the practices developed in that context.

Also, the interpretative character of this study refers to the researcher’s role as an active observer. In this piece of research, I was the teacher who gave the lessons and at the same time, I consider social practices and their emerging meanings in a given context and position myself, while considering my own beliefs and sociocultural background (BORTONI-RICARDO, 2008). In other words, I interpret the data observed as an active agent, drawing on my own social experiences to make sense of the given circumstances.

## 2.2. Research Context

The research was developed at Casa Pequeno Davi<sup>13</sup> (CPD), a non-governmental organization founded in 1985 and located in the outskirts of the capital city of Paraíba, João Pessoa. There, more than 350 boys and girls, from 7 to 18 years old are enrolled in professional training (silkscreen printing, designed furniture, *CorelDRAW* software) or pedagogical activities, including arts, music, dance and sports. Hence, this NGO aims at developing their cognitive, physical and professional potentials, and at contributing to the effectiveness of human rights, especially towards underprivileged, socially vulnerable children and adolescents, with educational activities and community service. Their agenda covers socially relevant themes such as: child labour, education, human rights, domestic violence, health, environmental awareness, among others.

Aligned with Casa Pequeno Davi's agenda, we carried out three extension projects there for three years (2015-2017) aiming to develop language and literacy skills of both children and young adults attending the workshops and pedagogical activities. The lessons observed, and which serve as *corpus* for this study, were included in the Extension Project *Teaching French and English to children and adolescents at NGOs: widening cultural horizons and promoting citizenship*, developed in 2017, under the coordination of professors Sandra Medeiros and Angélica Maia. It aimed at offering French-speaking and English-speaking lessons to about 60 children and adolescents participating in projects in non-governmental organizations in João Pessoa and Bayeux (a village next to the capital city João Pessoa).

Among the objectives of the lessons, the group of professors and teachers-to-be intended to initiate participants in learning foreign languages, and to raise awareness about the cultural diversity existing in the world, discussing topics of social relevance while working with a variety of textual genres (comics, music, videos, pamphlets, posters, among others) that could make them more willing and able to participate in society as reflective and informed citizens.

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<sup>13</sup> Further information available at <http://www.pequenodavi.org.br/>

### 2.3. Data generation

The *corpus* of this study is composed of the analysis of two of eight lessons<sup>14</sup> designed for a group of about fifteen students attending ludic-pedagogical classes at CPD in the afternoons<sup>15</sup>. The lessons happened for eight weeks and a series of themes concerning the domains of our lives were considered when tailoring the lesson plans (APPENDIX A) and selecting or drafting the materials (handouts, videos, images, etc) to be used. Hence, these are the items to be analysed alongside with the photos (APPENDIX B) and videos taken during the classes. Also, the analysis will focus on the learners' drawings, written texts and utterances produced during the lessons.

The first lesson took place in November 2017, days before the black awareness day celebrated in Brazil. Its aim was to raise awareness about the prejudice black people suffer every day in our society and how difficult it is for them to be recognized as dexterous, skilful and talented, able to do any job as well as or better than any other person, regardless of their race, gender or sexual orientation. Ultimately, the aim of the lesson was to show underprivileged children whose opportunities in life are limited that they can be proud of who they are, of where they come from and of what their ancestors left for Brazil, in terms of food, culture and identity. In this context, aspects of the English language were introduced and practised, such as verbs to express likes, abilities and possession, as well as vocabulary words related to the theme given.

In the second analysed lesson, we focused on teaching some jobs in English, particularly the ones they were most familiar with, considering their parents' jobs or those professions they dreamed of having in the future. There was also some focus on qualities that a professional should have to be successful in life, for instance, assiduity and determination. Most importantly, in this lesson, we aimed at motivating these children to make an effort to succeed at school and to believe that they can have the job they wish if they are determined, persistent and hard-working.

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<sup>14</sup> As it was mentioned before, the project included the planning and development of 8 lessons at Casa Pequeno Davi. The two lessons analysed in this paper were chosen due to the social relevance of the topics covered and to the multimodal nature of the materials prepared.

<sup>15</sup> The participants attend these ludic pedagogical classes in the afternoon, after going to school in the morning. It is compulsory the attendance at public or private school to participate in the projects offered by Casa Pequeno Davi. In relation to the ludic pedagogical classes, students receive reinforcement for what they are studying at school and discuss socially relevant themes, such as prejudice, domestic violence, child labour, and others, in a ludic way.

## 2.4. Analysis Procedures

The analysis is subdivided in relation to the changes in the domains of our lives, as put forward by Cope and Kalantzis (2000, 2009). The first part analyses the lesson about the black awareness day in Brazil, and it addresses the changes in our personal lives and citizenship. The second part investigates the lesson about jobs and it was intended to deal with the changes in our working lives.

Lesson plans and materials (handouts, videos, images etc), as well as the photos and videos taken during the observed lessons are scrutinized, as a way to identify which principles of the pedagogy of multiliteracies guided the activities designed (COPE; KALANTZIS, 2000). More specifically, we focus on discussing the four stages suggested by this approach, *i.e.* situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing and transformed practice and how they were articulated in the lessons. This way, we intend to answer the first question posed in the introductory chapter: To what extent did the lessons developed with the aid of the multimodal resources, such as videos, slides, images and handouts embrace the tenets of the pedagogy of multiliteracies and the participants' needs? Were the phases of pedagogical action proposed by that framework adopted, and if so, how?

Additionally, we intend to interpret how the adoption of these stages in the lessons may have enhanced the learning of a foreign language and/or assisted learners in the task of deconstructing their previous views on the socially relevant themes dealt in class, and designing a new and more authentic perspective of the world. Here, we aim at responding the question: How were the socially relevant themes discussed in each class redesigned by students and what kind of meanings emerged from their productions, considering the expansion of linguistic and cultural knowledge?

For that purpose, we rely on the principles of a social semiotic multimodal analysis (KRESS; van LEEUWEN, 2006) to learn how the drawings, sentences and utterances produced by students expressed their new redesigned views in a way that verbal language would not be enough to convey. Our intention is to investigate how learners used narrative and compositional elements and semiotic resources, such as colour, positioning, size, speech bubbles, framing, and others to represent reality and their new way of seeing the world through multimodal modes of language. In this case, we intend to answer the question: How did a multimodal analysis of the redesigned productions assist in understanding how students perceive the different domains of life approached in the lessons?

Below we present a table that summarizes the data and categories to be covered in the analysis:

**Table 2: Analysis Procedures**

<b>Data</b>	<b>Categories</b>
Lesson plans, materials (handouts, videos, images etc), photos and videos taken during the observed lessons, students' productions (drawings, utterances, multimodal texts, etc).	Phases of the pedagogy of multiliteracies framework and their features: situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing and transformed practice
	Meaning-making processes related to redesign in their drawings, considering the following elements of a social semiotic multimodal analysis: narrative and compositional function and semiotic resources, such as colour, positioning, size, speech bubbles, framing, and others.

Source: the author

Having explained the methodological course adopted to develop the research, as well as characteristics of the context and the participants, we present in the subsequent chapter the analysis of the generated data.



## CHAPTER 3

### DISCUSSION ON DATA ANALYSIS AND THEORY

In this chapter, we present the analysis of lesson plans, fragments of the classes given and parts of students' productions. We organized data considering the domains of life proposed by the pedagogies of multiliteracies, which were used as reference for choosing the themes of the lessons here analysed.

#### 3.1. Lesson 1: Domains of personal life and citizenship

This lesson was designed considering the black awareness day in Brazil, celebrated on November 20<sup>th</sup>. Hence, it sought to raise consciousness about black identity in that country by presenting some cultural aspects representative of African ascendance, such as food, music and dance. We intended to empower participants by strengthening the importance of African American cultural identity for a group of learners, who are majorly black, living on the margins of society. Ultimately, we wanted both to encourage them to be proud of the contributions that our African ascendants left and to discuss the systemic racism which is veiled in our society.

While preparing the lesson and trying to contextualize it with the research participants' lives, questions were proposed in Portuguese, such as: *What is it like to be black and live in Brazil? How difficult is it to be black in this country?* It was our understanding that addressing students' representation of being black in Brazil was an essential step to promote their literacy education. As Assis (2016) explains, literacy practices are oriented by social representations and these are built by and within discourses in a social context, which means that they are always being transformed, adapted and transmitted in social groups. In other words, that lesson was the space where they could share and co-construct their view on being black in Brazil, and where they could confront other prejudiced perspectives on that social representation.

Therefore, the first moment of the lesson was to learn from students if they knew what was celebrated on November 20<sup>th</sup>. One of the participants said it was the black awareness day and that they had done some work at school earlier. She also promptly uttered her definition when asked what it was: *Black awareness is to respect, like, the*

*race of each person [...]* (fragment of lesson 1 video recording, my translation). Three videos were presented in Portuguese, as a resource to discuss social representations often propagated in TV campaigns.

The first video<sup>16</sup> showed a series of black people answering the questions *What is it like to be black and live in Brazil? How difficult is it to be black in this country?* Students reacted to it by raising some discussion on racism in their mother tongue (Portuguese). While some pointed out reassuring statements of interviewed characters who were proud of their colour and culture, others mentioned cases of prejudice and disrespect reported in the video. One of them said: *“This is prejudice, teacher!”* (fragment of lesson 1 video recording, my translation) and another: *“Teacher, this stresses me. These people are very racist.”* (fragment of lesson 1 video recording, my translation)

As for the second video<sup>17</sup>, it raised some questions about what we are made of (e.g. flesh and bones, war and peace, life and dreams, love and hatred, happiness and sorrow) and stated that we are all the same. It reinforced that our colour, our physical traits (mouth, hair and nose), our rhythm and our consciousness are our voices. Some discussion also emerged from these dichotomies, for instance, when the teacher asked why it was said that we are made of happiness and sorrow.

Finally, after the third video<sup>18</sup>, the teacher first asked what students liked best about it and some answered that the characters’ hair called their attention. As they replied in Portuguese, the teacher presented the word in English: *How do you say cabelo in English? It’s hair!* (fragment of lesson 1 video recording). Additionally, the chunk *I like* was reinforced. The teacher also asked about the importance of that celebration. Among the answers, the words *respect* and *equality* appeared as some of the reasons. With the next slide, the teacher explained that it was also relevant to be proud of the legacy left by African ascendants so that their contributions were acknowledged in society.

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<sup>16</sup> Available at: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PZczek\\_eYv0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PZczek_eYv0)

<sup>17</sup> Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VAhwJfwhWTo>

<sup>18</sup> Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E9YJDhqVfCc>

**Figure 1: African contributions to Brazilian Culture**



Source: the author (slide used in lesson 1).

As Figure 1 shows, with some cue words, the teacher elicited examples of contributions, such as *samba*<sup>19</sup>, *capoeira*<sup>20</sup> and some food, such as *feijoada*<sup>21</sup> and *vatapá*<sup>22</sup>. While listing the cases, students shared some of their references which were aligned with the theme of this lesson. For instance, the song *Pérola Negra*<sup>23</sup> by Daniela Mercury was mentioned and sung in class.

The meaning of these cues, which served to present the target language of this lesson, was consolidated with the handout which follows (Figure 2). In it, students read both verbal language and static images to make meaning of the cultural contributions.

<sup>19</sup> Samba is a Brazilian musical genre and dance style, with its roots in Africa via the West African slave trade and African religious traditions.

<sup>20</sup> Capoeira is an Afro-Brazilian martial art that combines elements of dance, acrobatics and music.

<sup>21</sup> Feijoada is the Brazilian national dish and it is a stew of beans with beef and pork.

<sup>22</sup> Vatapá is an Afro-Brazilian dish made from bread, shrimp, coconut milk, finely ground peanuts and palm oil mashed into a creamy paste.

<sup>23</sup> Lyrics at <https://www.lettras.mus.br/daniela-mercury/423964/>

**Figure 2: Consolidating target language**

Considering the framework proposed by the pedagogy of multiliteracies, students had access to the available designs presented in different modalities of meaning (audio-visual, oral and gestural) to socially situate the theme of the lesson. That is, with the video campaigns, with the teacher talking, gesticulating and eliciting from students their positioning, as well as the cue words and images related to African contributions to Brazilian culture, students experienced *the known and the new* (COPE; KALANTZIS, 2009), in the sense that they may have drawn connections between what was happening in class and their out-of-school experiences.

Maia, Dourado, Ferreira and Conceição (2016) explain that *the known* concerns students' own experiences, interests and perspectives brought to light in the learning situation, and which serve as a starting point for the development and /or strengthening of new knowledge. For instance, learners attempted to define the black awareness day based on their previous experiences at school, and they referred to some music, food as well as dance that they were familiarized with, and which related to the theme. Hence, there was some evidence that participants were engaged and willing to learn more about the legacy of our ancestors. As for *the new*, the same authors suggest that it entails exposing students to new situations and texts which are sufficiently close to their realities, in a way that they can draw a parallel between *the new and the known* and, consequently, design new paths or strategies to reading the new and unfamiliar texts. Although some were outspoken and promptly responded to the elicitation, there were other participants

just observing, reading the new data and, perhaps, constructing new meanings related to the black awareness day.

The lesson progressed with participants learning about food (black beans, shrimp, banana, chilli pepper, coconut and coffee), dance, music (samba) and sport (capoeira) with the aid of different modes of communication. They danced samba (as can be seen in appendix B) and said if they could or not follow the rhythm (modal verb *can* introduced and practised). Also, learners watched a video<sup>24</sup> in English, with a *capoeira* teacher presenting some steps for the sport. They promptly followed the instructions and, in the end, shared with their peers whether they liked or not to dance samba or play capoeira (using the chunks *I like/ I don't like*). As for the food, there were images on the slides and realia, so they could have their senses sharpened while trying to identify the items.

It is noteworthy that, while presenting vocabulary, a student asked why the word order was inverted in English. “*Teacher, why do people write backwards in English? For example, in Portuguese black é preto and beans feijão, so the translation would be preto feijão?*” (fragment of lesson 1 video recording, my translation). The teacher explained that there is a different word order in English for adjectives and provided more examples, such as blue jeans.

Considering the framework proposed by the pedagogy of multiliteracies, this moment may be interpreted as an instance of *Overt Instruction*. As Cope and Kalantzis (2000, p. 31) explain, this is when “students shape for themselves an explicit metalanguage of Design”. Although the vocabulary presentation moment involved drilling and rote memorisation, it also served the purpose of scaffolding participants’ learning processes. For instance, in lieu of using a single mode of presentation, there were videos and realia for students to build a “conscious awareness and control over what was being learned – over the intra-systematic relations of the domain being practiced” (COPE; KALANTZIS, 2000, p.33). That is, while designing their own definition of black identity in Brazil, they were also taking control over the linguistic design, building on their own understanding of how the elements are organized (adjectives come before nouns) to make meaning in the new language.

Also, it is our understanding that there is not a single way of learning. Hence, when proposing visual (the videos and images), kinaesthetic (students dancing samba or following capoeira steps) and interpersonal activities (with students sharing their

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<sup>24</sup> Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HbUxXJKitS4>

experiences), we tried to ensure a multimodal environment, one which could cater for the range of intelligences<sup>25</sup> (GARDNER, 1983) that we possess and one which would suit learners' primary preferred learning systems to construct a new perspective on being black in Brazil.

Furthermore, students watched a short video *O cabelo de Lelê*<sup>26</sup>, which tells the story of a little girl who had always been unhappy with her curly hair until she read about African ascendance and learnt how creative she could be with her hair by combing it differently every day. While watching this story, the teacher asked what students thought about her disgust for her hair and what she could do to feel better. While some answered that Lelê should have a haircut, comb it or have it straightened, one student uttered: “*What’s the matter with her hair? If she doesn’t like it, she can give it to me – I love this style!*” (Fragment of lesson 1 video recording, my translation). Her positioning in class may have challenged the view of others that curly hair is ugly or needs to be changed. Also, the reason for focusing on hair style was the fact that a lot of the awareness campaigns against racism and prejudice towards black people in Brazil shed light on this feature, which can be interpreted as a strong symbol for African culture.

Therefore, this stage of the lesson attempted to acknowledge this feature as an important cultural symbol and to demur prejudiced discourses related to African hair styles. Referring to the pedagogical framework that underpins this study, the *Critical Framing* factor seems to be on focus here. Although we believe that it crosses all the stages of a lesson, this moment appears to have served as the basis for the *Transformed Practice*.

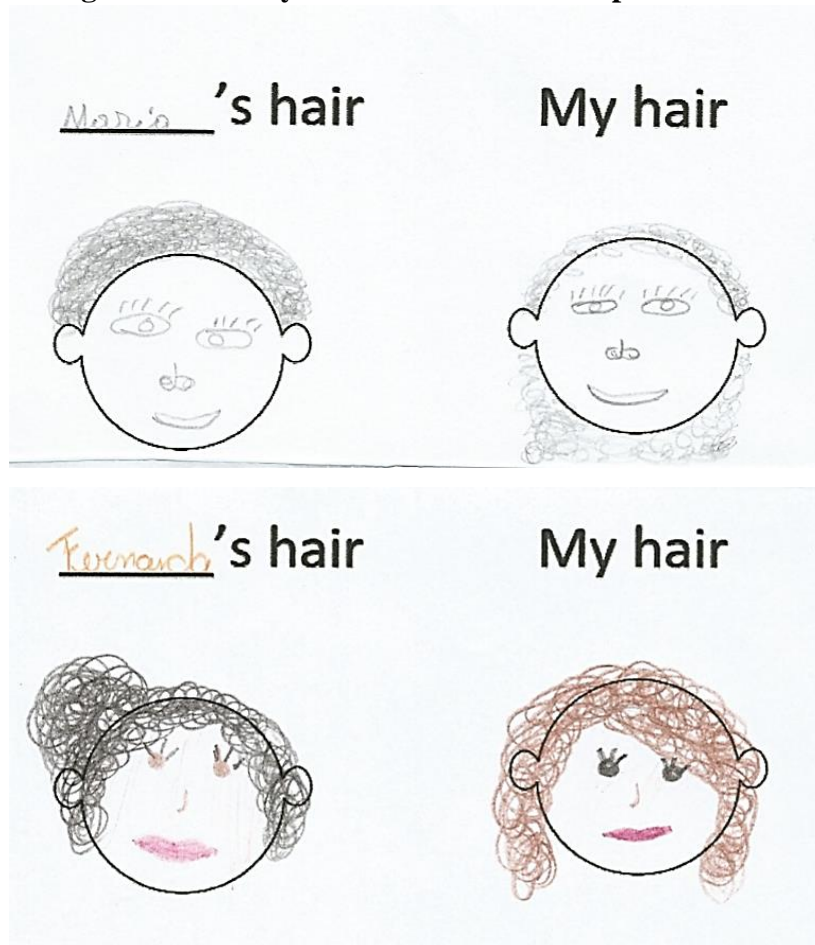
As Duboc (2015) explains, the *Critical Framing* factor concerns the critical interpretative approach to reading a text that considers historical, cultural, political, ideological and sociocultural aspects, both *the known* and *the new*. And, at that point, students were already aware of the cultural importance of African ascendance in Brazil and had challenged some oppressive discourses towards the black. We could see them singing the musical genre presented, trying some capoeira moves in class and drawing both how they perceived their own and their friend’s hair, highlighting African traits (when that was the case), as Figure 3 shows.

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<sup>25</sup> “We do not possess a single intelligence, but a range of intelligences. All people have these intelligences, but in each person one (or more) of them is more pronounced.” (GARDNER, 1983 *apud* HARMER, 2007, p.90)

<sup>26</sup> Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RriQiWMnDXU>

**Figure 3: Hair style as African culture representation**



Source: Students' productions for lesson 1

It is believed that a *Transformed Practice* was under construction here, one that held a strong view towards African identity and its contributions to the national heritage, and one able to challenge oppression and injustice. *Transformed Practice*, as Maia, Dourado, Ferreira and Conceição (2016, p. 101, my translation) argue, is the stage that implies

[...] the attempt to transpose the knowledge derived from the literacy experience lived in class to other situations that may occur in the learner's life. It is when the teacher can help the student to recognize real possibilities of change of attitude in everyday events, even if this does not result in immediate behaviour changes.

Also, when planning this activity, we aimed at dealing with symbolical traits that could enhance students' cultural identity. As the video campaigns suggested before (refer to the lesson plan – APPENDIX A), African ascendants should consider their hair, nose,

colour and any other physical trait as their voice, as a symbol of power and resistance. In Figure 3, their curly hair is the symbol we aimed for.

Considering the representational metafunction (KRESS; van LEEUWEN, 2006) of multimodal texts, these drawings are conceptual representations, since there are no vectors or background. The sole focus is on the attributes hair style and colour, which seem to enhance and value the African culture and identity. That is, students used some semiotic resources to convey meaning, to add symbolism to this physical trait. If we had relied on verbal language, for this task, students could have written texts in which their pride for their hair would be present, and sentences such as *My hair, my voice!* or *I love this hair style!* would eventually arise, as it actually did.

Thus, we believe that these drawings reinforce the need to use the array of mode possibilities we have to hand to support English language learning and teaching for the current generation. It seems that these multimodal texts, with all their meaning potential, ease the path for better understanding of some linguistics concepts and assist teachers in dealing with socially relevant themes in class, while keeping learners engaged and participative.

In the end of the lesson, students were asked to contribute to a campaign supported by Casa Pequeno Davi, named *Black Lives (Vidas Negras)*. For this project, participants were asked to draw posters with things and people that represented the African influence in our country, to be used as part of the campaign to raise awareness about racism and social injustice towards African people. Figure 4 shows a literacy event in which a student used both verbal and non-verbal language to make her poster.



**Figure 4: Vidas Negras: Equality makes the world different**



Source: Student's final production for lesson 1

There, it is possible to see aspects discussed in class, such as the girl's hair style and a bowl of *feijoada* (black beans), along with a Brazilian flag. Additionally, this participant wrote in Portuguese *Equality makes the world different* (my translation). When asked to talk about her poster, she stated that she liked black beans, that the drawing showed her with curly hair and that equality makes a better world. The teacher reinforced the chunks *I like* and *I have* (*curly hair*) so the learner could present it in English.

Also, with the aid of a multimodal analysis and considering the metafunctions of visual language (KRESS; van LEEUWEN, 2006), we can presume that the participant attempted to represent some objects as realistically as possible by making use of some compositional elements. In relation to the flag, the same colours were used and even the stars that represent the country's states were positioned as in the original artefact. Also, the bowl of *feijoada* had beans (represented in black) and meat cut in varied sizes, to represent the parts that compose the stew.

Furthermore, Figure 5 shows the drawing of a participant who had never tried shrimp before and depicted it as the food he was craving at that moment. Considering some categories of multimodal analysis mentioned in the theoretical framework (KRESS; van LEEUWEN, 2006; ALMEIDA, 2009; NASCIMENTO; BEZERRA; HEBERLE,

2011), we can see traces of a narrative representation, with the presence of a thinking bubble (a mental process) to indicate his craving. Moreover, it can be inferred that this participant may be fond of *anime* or cartoons that depict a culture different from his (the character's eyes). However, he adds to the drawing some more reference to African culture, considering the character's afro hair style.

**Figure 5: "I want to eat this shrimp!"**



Source: Student's final production for lesson 1

Hence, it seems that this participant combined his previous experiences, *the known*, with drawings, possibly considering cartoons and *anime* as references, to make meaning of *the new* knowledge presented in the learning context. He applied both *the known* and *the new* knowledge creatively to make "an intervention in the world which is truly innovative and creative, and which brings to bear the learner's interests, experiences and aspirations" (COPE; KALANTZIS, 2009, p. 186). That is, he made a drawing that portrayed his immediate interests, the shrimp, using previous notions of sketching (thinking bubbles) to advert the Black awareness day, emphasizing some of the African contributions to our culture, such as food and style. He could have just said "*I want to eat this shrimp*" to communicate his desire. Instead, he relied on another mode, a drawing, which allowed his creativity to surge and active participation in the campaign.

Considering both literacy events presented in this section and the stages of this lesson, it is indicated that the interweaving of modes of communication, relying on both verbal and non-verbal language, may have contributed to transformed practice, fostering a new perspective on being black in Brazil. In fact, this hybridism may have allowed the exploration of a meaning potential that the use of a single linguistic mode would not do.

In terms of their personal lives, it appears that this lesson allowed learners to be the agents in their own learning process. Not only were they able to articulate and enact their own identities, but they also engaged in discussion about a social relevant topic and learned new and unfamiliar social language (COPE; KALANTZIS, 2009). In terms of citizenship, learners had an active role in propagating the message of equality and respect to differences in their community by making the campaign posters. As Hawkins and Norton (2009, pp. 34) explain, by doing so, the pedagogical experience may have seized a moment of awakening, which “promoted students’ emerging awareness of critical issues, including their own status and positioning, thus enabling them to break down boundaries and redistribute power relations among themselves”. Ultimately, this lesson supported the view that, despite differences of colour, class or creed, all people should have equal voices and deserve respect.

### **3.2. Lesson 2: Domain of working lives**

This lesson intended to deal with the realm of the learners’ future working lives, especially taking into account what is expected from a qualified worker in the modern globalized world. As Cope and Kalantzis (2000, 2009) explain, the view of mindless and repetitive work supported by mass production has been rejected and has opened doors to a multiskilled and flexible worker. Thus, the authors suggest that the pedagogical work developed in schools should respond to this demand by providing access to material resources which assist in the education of future workers who are committed, skilful and knowledgeable, able to tackle the demands of a competitive market and to engage critically with the conditions of their working lives.

Aligned with this view, for the analysed lesson, first the social practice was situated considering a brainstorm activity of some jobs learners knew in Portuguese, with the teacher providing the translation on the board. They also mentioned their parents’ occupations, such as housewives, bus drivers and builders. Then, a short video called *When I grow up*<sup>27</sup> by Jasmin Lai was presented to set the context. Without any verbal language, it told the story of a little girl having trouble to decide on a future career that she would like to write about in response to a school assignment. Everywhere she went in town she would see herself trying the occupations (this is depicted by showing the girl

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<sup>27</sup> Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0H46xTcrCjw>

wearing different uniforms) and failing one at a time. Finally, after a long and exhaustive pursuit, she gives up on trying to fit in and leaves her classroom delighted, wearing her own clothes and influencing others to do the same.

The aim with this video was to show that the first step to decide on a career is to value oneself, one's identity and aptitudes. The goal was to empower participants with a new vision "[...] of meaningful success to all; a vision that is not defined exclusively in economic terms and that has embedded within it a critique of hierarchy and economic injustice" (COPE; KALANTZIS, 2000, p. 13). That is, considering the unfavoured and deprived status of the students, the video may have contributed to promote a belief that they could be what they wanted and were able to, regardless of colour, ethnic or social background.

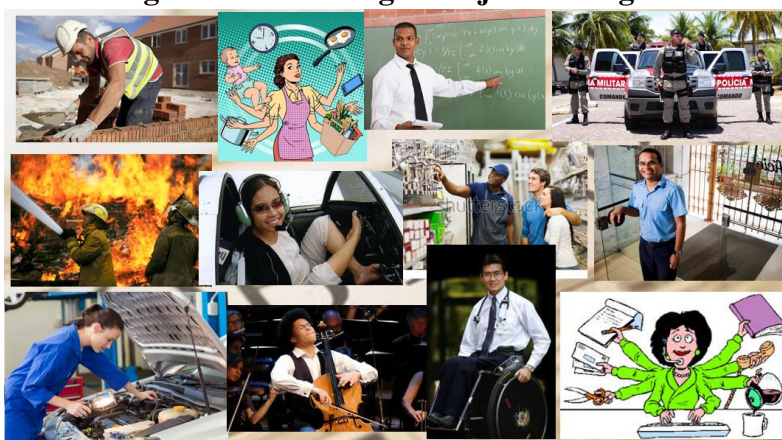
Thus, resting on the multiliteracies framework, the part of the lesson described represents the *Critical Framing* stage, since it involved processes of reasoning, with students inferring and drawing conclusions along the video, which had only a sequence of images to convey meaning. They had to establish functional relations of cause and effect (COPE; KALANTZIS, 2009) to explain aspects of the text, such as the cause of the character's frustration for not knowing what to write on the paper and the effect it caused in her life. At the same time, they may have drawn a parallel with their own lives, by reflecting on what they would have written if they had been asked the same question.

Also, while watching the video, the teacher scaffolded the meaning making process by asking a set of questions, so learners could understand the short story: *How does the girl feel?; Is she confused? Why?; What job is this? Look at her uniform. Who wears it?; Does she succeed in being a baker? What's she doing?* According to the framework proposed by Cope and Kalantzis (2000), these active interventions on the part of the teacher are considered the *Overt Instruction* stage. It occurs when the teacher recruits the learners' background experiences to build an authentic understanding of the new text. Although the linguistic design was not available in this video, students were led to construct representations of reality based on the visual design, taking into account elements such as colour, vector and perspective. Not only did these interventions helped learners to understand the story, but the questions may also have contributed to their designing of a new perception of the domain of working lives, especially considering the moment of choosing a profession, when one should challenge the view that being from an underprivileged community, a person cannot be a doctor, a dentist or a ballet dancer.

It may also have helped them to see that they should rest on their abilities, aptitudes and motivation to seek the best and most meaningful career path.

The lesson continued with the teacher presenting vocabulary (builder, secretary, mechanic, shop assistant, housewife, teacher, doctor, porter, police officer, firefighter). As Figure 6 shows, in the images, there were people with disabilities flying a plane or as a doctor. It also depicted a woman as a mechanic, in an attempt to disrupt gender stereotypes and reinforce the democratic vision that social pre-conceptions related to the work market should be challenged.

**Figure 6: Presenting some jobs in English**



Source: the author (PowerPoint slide prepared for lesson 2)

As a follow-up activity, students were asked to work as a team. At first, they had a job hunt and ran around the class to find the matching parts - the images of workers and the slips with the written word. After that, the teacher provided the image of a city and asked students one at a time to place the professionals in their corresponding workplace. Also, learners worked in pairs, miming some of the occupations and testing peers.

At this point, our intention with teamwork activities was to promote a collective mindset and a horizontal relationship between learners that resembles the contemporary work environment (COPE; KALANTZIS, 2009). Moreover, by using videos, images, oral commands and a hybrid linguistic input, we aimed at providing “students with the opportunity to develop skills for access to new forms of work through learning the new language of work” (COPE; KALANTZIS, 2000, p. 13). In other words, students performed a task as a team, reading texts displayed in multiple forms (verbal and non-verbal) and relying on their life experiences, *the known*, to make meaning of *the new* (what the occupations were and where the professionals worked in town).

At the end, students were asked to tell the group the job they would like to have in the future by drawing themselves (as can be seen in appendix B). First, they watched another video with children answering the question *What do you want to be when you grow up?*<sup>28</sup> It was a subtitled video, with participants talking while their drawings appeared on the background. The children worked on their drawings, with some writing the occupation, such as *I want to be a goalkeeper*, and, at the end, they recorded a video talking about their productions.

Figure 7 shows the drawing of a future dancer and singer. She takes part in the ballet classes available at Casa Pequeno Davi, which can be noticed by the choreography the three girls are doing. According to the multimodal analysis framework adopted (KRESS; van LEEUWEN, 2006; ALMEIDA, 2009; NASCIMENTO; BEZERRA; HEBERLE, 2011), this is a narrative representation of reality, with an actional – transactional process. That is, there are three participants interacting, with two following a leader, in case of the dancers, and there are vectors indicating the direction of their actions. Moreover, it can be inferred that the drawer, while dancing, puts herself in a position of leadership in comparison to the other participants. Also, it seems that she used a compositional element to attract the viewer's attention, drawing herself bigger than the others and placing them on the background.

Additionally, there is a similarity between the participants (same clothes, same choreography) and how organized they are indicate a conceptual representational of reality. We could say that, in this visual structure, there is an overt classification of members, since the drawer's superordinate position (she's bigger than the others and is at the front) in relation to the other participants in the drawing can be identified.

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<sup>28</sup> Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j4S8LnHZuuE>



**Figure 7: “I want to be a dancer and a singer”**



Source: Student's final production for lesson 2

Hence, it is possible to identify her notions of being a dancer and a singer, and to infer that the sentence *I want to be a dancer and a singer* would not be enough to convey such meanings. For her, it seems that these occupations are done in groups, with the ballet dancers performing synchronically a specific step and wearing the same clothes, and a band with more than one singer, also dressing similarly.

In other words, this literacy event depicts a combination of the *known* and the *new* knowledge to respond to the question posed. It also shows that this hybrid production, with a drawing and all the visual meaning resources (size, positioning, vectors), the written word and a video, allows the participant to have an active role in the learning process, with access to an array of modes of communication available to make meaning, to make herself understood.

Whereas the picture above emphasizes teamwork, common among contemporaneous workers, Figure 8 shows an opposite view, with the drawer being an artist and a businessman working on his own, perhaps unconsciously portraying the solitude of some occupations and the fierce competition in the work market, respectively. We could also say that these are narrative representations of reality, which depict actional processes. However, differently from Figure 7, these are non-transactional processes, as there is only one participant and a vector involved in the action related to each occupation.

Through this child's drawing, we believe that there are some sociocultural aspects that the learner is already aware of, and which are present in his community, as well as some conceptions related to his future working life that he has already constructed. For instance, we can assume that he may see himself working individually, being concerned with details (e.g. combination of colours and positioning of objects) and dressing code (e.g. smart clothes).

**Figure 8: "I want to be a businessman"**



Source: Student's final production for lesson 2

Here, multimodality also plays a significant role, allowing the child to represent his future job, shedding light on the aspects of both occupations that are most meaningful to him. Ultimately, this literacy event shows that, in this transformed practice, this new way of perceiving the world of work, the child rests on his background experiences, his previous conceptions of what it is like to be an artist and a businessman to draw himself as one. As Cope and Kalantzis (2000, p.23) explain, "the Redesigned is founded on historically and culturally received patterns of meaning", which means that, in the process of reconstructing and renegotiating their identities, learners rely on the available designs, that is, their previous literacy practices, the videos and images showed in class, as well as on the discussion, to make new meaning.



Another example of literacy event that reveals current practices that are part of their everyday lives is shown in Figure 9. It is also a narrative representation of reality, with a non-transactional process (there is only one participant and one vector). In it, the participant draws herself as a teacher assigning homework, which is due the following day. Although there are no students in the drawing, it can be inferred that there is an implicit transactional process, as the depicted teacher must be interacting with someone. Yet, the point is that, based on her representation of a teacher, it seems that this professional identity remains traditional, with a person in power standing in front of the class and prescribing activities. As Souza (2016, p.27, my translation) argues, “a social being is formed by the experiences that he/she has lived and the knowledge he/she has obtained throughout his life”. Thus, when designing a new perspective of a future professional career, she draws on her previous experiences that serve as reference to construct new meanings. Perhaps by engaging in discussion and reflection upon what it is like to be a teacher, this learner may (de) construct this view and redesign this social representation, taking into account what is currently expected from an educator in our particular social context: a professional who constantly reflects upon his/her practice and who is in constant (re) construction of his/her *self* (SOUZA, 2016).

**Figure 9: “Homework is due tomorrow”**



Source: Student's final production for lesson 2

As a final message for this lesson, the teacher elicited what the strengths of qualified professionals were. Among their responses, being studious, hard-working, honest, polite and kind prevailed. The aim with this final activity was to raise students' awareness and responsibility towards their studies, so that, in the future, they may be recognized for their competence, hard work and character, regardless of their origin, race or skin colour.

## **FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The aim of this study was to investigate how two English language lessons based on the pedagogy of multiliteracies and using multimodal resources were able to promote language learning, empowerment and active citizenship of underprivileged children and adolescents at a non-governmental Brazilian organization, Casa Pequeno Davi.

For this purpose, we relied on the fundamentals of literacy education (BARTON; HAMILTON, 2000; KRESS, 1997; PERRY, 2012), the framework put forward by the pedagogy of multiliteracies (COPE; KALANTZIS, 2000,2009) and the principles of a social semiotic multimodal analysis (ALMEIDA, 2009; KRESS; van LEEUWEN, 2006; JEWITT, 2009; NASCIMENTO; BEZERRA; HEBERLE, 2011), which served as reference to understanding the meanings made and redesigned by participants throughout the lessons.

The lessons analysed within the scope of a qualitative and interpretative methodological approach (BORTONI-RICARDO, 2008) dealt with the different domains of our lives (personal, citizenship and work) explained by the pedagogy of multiliteracies (COPE; KALANTZIS, 2000, 2009). The choice of those domains provided a good opportunity to foster an education that responds to the demands of contemporary social realities, that enhances active citizenship and promotes inclusion of underprivileged groups.

It was possible to see in both lessons the use of various modes of communication, such as videos, images and drawings to convey meaning and to contextualize, both local and globally, the learning of a new language (Situated Practice). Students were engaged and had the assistance of the teacher to make meaning of messages and discourses within the available texts (TV campaigns, short story, images and drawings) by deducing and hypothesizing how form (colour, metalanguage and spatial layout) created meaning (Overt Instruction). Additionally, the lessons dealt with socially relevant themes, such as

prejudice and inequality. Students reflected upon how meanings were made in the texts and challenged oppressive discourses that were suggested by the texts (Critical Framing).

Furthermore, it can be inferred that there was some resignification of concepts and world views when they were asked to apply what was learnt by drawing themselves as future workers and producing posters for an awareness campaign. They drew themselves with curly hair and proud of their culture and African ascendance. Also, in the productions, they were teachers, business people and artists, occupations which once may have been regarded just as dreams, but then were represented as real and possible careers for a future life, where colour, creed or social status would not define their competences or disposition to be studious and qualified professionals.

Additionally, we believe that learners would not be able to convey such meanings only by relying on verbal language. Simple utterances such as *I want to be a doctor*, or *I have curly hair* and *I love my colour* perhaps would not have the same impact as their drawings. The results of the multimodal analysis showed that they used some semiotic resources, such as: vectors to indicate the direction of actions, which, for example, described a leading role in a dance group, or conceptions of being a teacher (pointing to the black board and assigning homework) and a businessman (carrying a suitcase and texting while walking); narrative tools (thinking bubbles) to depict a craving for shrimp; and salience (colour and size) to convey meaning and represent their new (de) constructed views.

In terms of future research perspectives, we believe that the impact of the pedagogy of multiliteracies as a teaching approach to English language education in multilingual and multicultural contexts could be further investigated, as a way to ascertain how such pedagogy may offer some effective options to deal with the challenges of linguistic, pedagogical and cultural barriers to learning.

Ultimately, with the findings in this study, we aim at encouraging more language educators to include in their planning multiple modes of communication, which are evermore part of contemporaneity, to promote literacy education. By doing so, perhaps language lessons will be regarded as much more than moments to learn how to decipher a code and to be linguistically competent. Instead, the idea here put forward is that language classrooms can also be spaces for social inclusion, empowerment and active citizenship, where every voice is heard, and learners have a chance to combine their sociocultural backgrounds and the new language while transforming themselves into informed and conscious citizens.

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## APPENDIX A

### LESSON PLAN 1 – BLACK AWARENESS DAY

#### AIMS

To raise awareness about black identity in Brazil by presenting some cultural aspects that represent African ascendance in our country.

#### MATERIALS

Slides, realia, handout, coloured pencils, pencils

Estimated time	Activity	Procedure
	Slide 1/2 – Lead-In	<p>T elicits what the topic of the lesson is by asking what is celebrated on November 20<sup>th</sup>. Students watch 2 short videos and engage in a whole group discussion, with the T asking why it is important to celebrate the black awareness day. T questions if it is difficult to be black in Brazil and why.</p> <p>Videos available at:</p> <p>1<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PZczek_eYv0">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PZczek_eYv0</a></p> <p>2<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VAhwJfwhWTo">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VAhwJfwhWTo</a></p>
	Slide 3/4 – Reading about black awareness day	<p>Since SS have been talking about the theme throughout the week, T elicits what they know about the African influence in our country in terms of music, dance, religion, a symbol, style, sport and food. SS then are given a handout and asked to number the images according to the category. SS check in pairs and with the group.</p>
	<p>Slide 3 – Vocab presentation and practice</p> <p>Speaking practice</p>	<p>T presents realia and practises pronunciation. (banana, coconut, coffee, black beans, spice pepper, vatapá (shrimp, bread). SS practise <i>I like.../ I don't like...</i> with this food. T tests volunteers' senses by giving/showing realia. T asks individually if SS like or not or if have never tried.</p> <p>Then, SS mingle using a <i>find someone who</i> activity (SS tick or cross the food and write friend's name – see handout</p>
	<p>Slide 4 – Vocab presentation and practice</p> <p>TPR activities</p>	<p>T presents capoeira and samba. T shows a quick video on how to play capoeira <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HbUxXJKitS4">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HbUxXJKitS4</a> and invites SS to clap their hands and try out. After that, T plays just dance video with <i>Mas que nada</i> <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=il45Xi3312U">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=il45Xi3312U</a> and</p>

		SS dance along. At the end, T practises <i>I can dance samba and play capoeira</i> .
	Slide 17-25 – Vocab presentation and practice	T presents styles of hair and highlights the Africans contribution in style by showing a video with some illustration from the book <i>O cabelo de Lelê</i> . T briefly summarizes the story by saying that Lelê didn't like her hair until she read about the African influence and became proud of her style. T asks SS to draw the style of hair of a friend and theirs. T leaves model on the screen.
	Production	SS are asked to draw for a CPD campaign about the Black awareness day. T tells SS they should draw things, people that represent the African influence in our country. Allow some time at the end for SS to present their drawings and tell the group what their representation is.

**Teacher's notes:****Assumptions:**

- And if they don't know/ have never tried shrimp/ spicy pepper or any other food? – T included *I don't know* option.
- T may run out of time to do activity about *O cabelo de Lelê* → T cuts it short and simply presents the different styles and asks which SS like best.
- T may run out of time and may leave out the *Find someone who* activity. Instead, ask SS to mingle and ask friends what they like or not.





Casa Pequeno Davi

Why should we celebrate it?  
What should we be proud of?

1. music

Brazilian Holidays  
Black Awareness Day

7. symbol

2. dance



6. sport

3. food

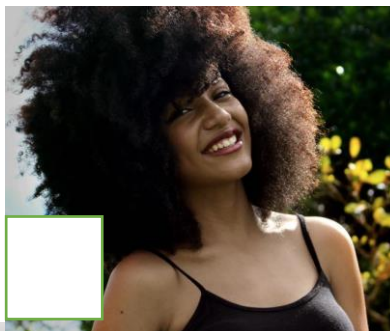
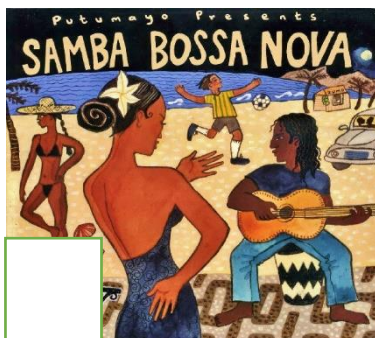
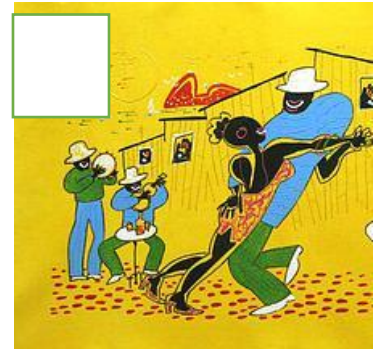
4. style

5. religion

Number.



3



## LESSON PLAN – Working Lives

### AIMS

To teach jobs in English in the context of talking about the values that are expected for a future worker.

### SUBAIM

Be good at; I want to be a + occupation

Vocabulary: builder, secretary, mechanic, shop assistant, housewife, teacher, doctor, vet, police officer, firefighter

### MATERIALS

Slides, Slips, A4 sheets of paper, coloured pencils, crayons

Estimated time	Activity	Procedure
	Lead -in	T talks about their parents' occupations. T writes new vocabulary on board.
	Reading Video – what job to choose?	T plays videos <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0H46xTcrCjw">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0H46xTcrCjw</a> and scaffolds interpretation by asking questions (What job is this? How does she feel? Why is she confused/sad? What's she doing?)
	Vocabulary presentation	T presents vocabulary (slide) and draws attention to the workers with disability to reinforce the idea of social inclusion
	Vocabulary practice	SS play a "job hunt". They run around the classroom and match the slips of paper (image + written word). T drills pronunciation. After that, SS are asked to mime jobs and test their peers. Finally, SS are asked to place workers in the image of a city (Where do they work?) on the board.
	Production drawing	T presents video with children talking about their drawings (What I want to be when I grow up) and elicits occupations. After that, T asks SS to draw 1 or 2 jobs they'd like to have in the future. Then, SS present their drawings and record videos.



# BUILDER



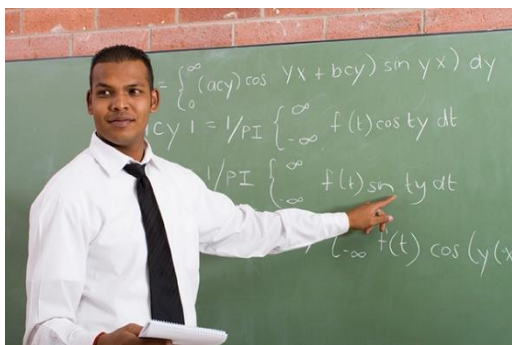
# PILOT



# DOCTOR



# SECRETARY



# TEACHER



# MUSICIAN





PORTER



HOUSEWIFE



POLICE



FIREFIGHTER



SHOP ASSISTANT

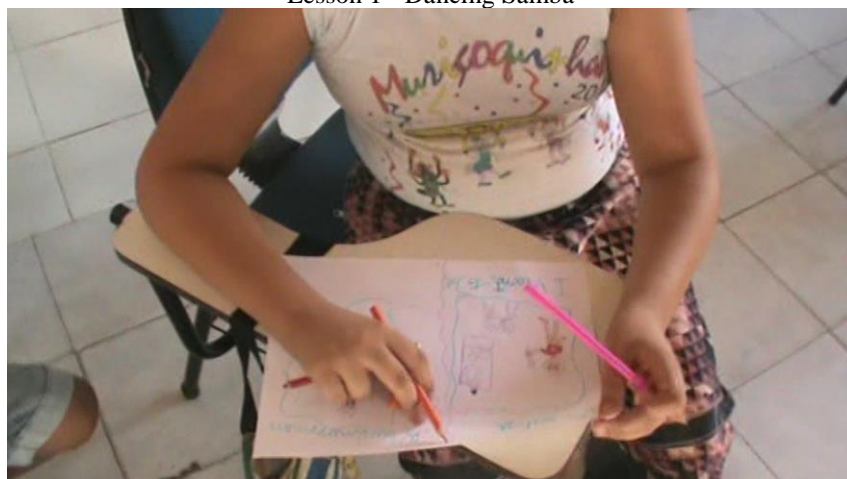


MECHANIC

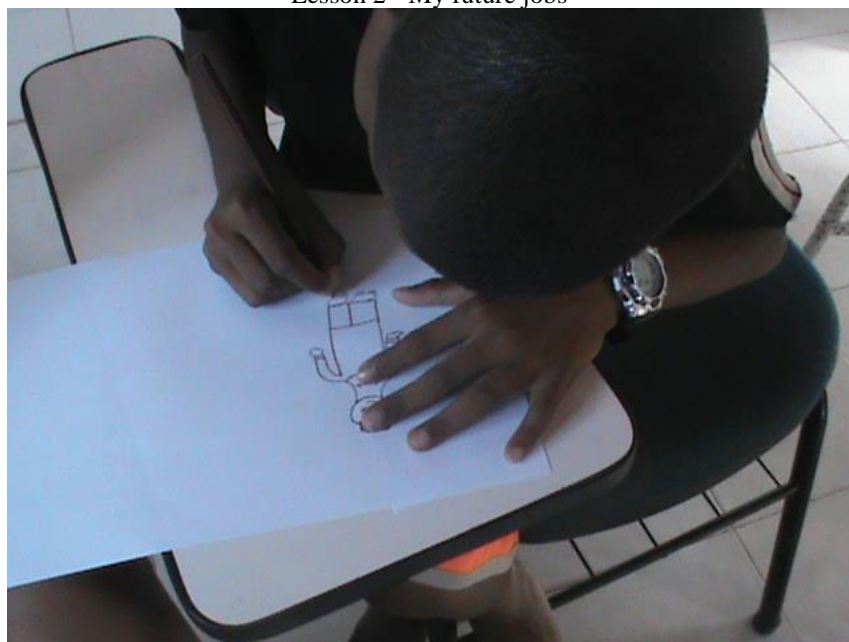
## APPENDIX B



Lesson 1 - Dancing Samba



Lesson 2 - My future jobs



Lesson 2 - My future jobs



ANNEX A

Casa Pequeno Davi

**TERMO DE AUTORIZAÇÃO PARA REALIZAÇÃO DA PESQUISA**

Eu, CLAUDIA MARIA DA COSTA DE LIMA, coordenadora da Casa Pequeno Davi, CPF Nº 510.592.824-53, autorizo JONATHAN FEITOSA FERREIRA, RG Nº 3091155, CPF Nº 075.647.464-75, discente em LETRAS - INGLÊS da UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DA PARAÍBA, matrícula Nº 11427728, a realizar as aulas de inglês no período vespertino nesta instituição, com um grupo de aproximadamente quinze alunos entre oito e doze anos, participantes das atividades lúdico-pedagógicas desenvolvidas neste recinto, para a realização do Projeto de Pesquisa ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING AND MULTILITERACIES IN A NON-GOVERNMENTAL BRAZILIAN ORGANIZATION: PROMOTING CITIZENSHIP AND EMPOWERMENT, que tem por objetivo primário investigar como aulas de inglês, desenvolvidas à luz dos princípios da pedagogia de multiletramentos, utilizaram uma variedade de textos multimodais como ferramenta para promover a aprendizagem do idioma, o empoderamento e a cidadania ativa de crianças carentes em uma organização não-governamental.

O pesquisador acima qualificado se compromete a:

- 1- Obedecer às disposições éticas de proteger os participantes da pesquisa, garantindo-lhes o máximo de benefícios e o mínimo de riscos.
- 2- Assegurar a privacidade das pessoas citadas nos documentos institucionais e/ou contatadas diretamente, de modo a proteger suas imagens, bem como garantem que não utilizarão as informações coletadas em prejuízo dessas pessoas e/ou da instituição, respeitando deste modo as Diretrizes Éticas da Pesquisa Envolvendo Seres Humanos, nos termos estabelecidos na Resolução CNS Nº 466/2012, e obedecendo as disposições legais estabelecidas na Constituição Federal Brasileira, artigo 5º, incisos X e XIV e no Novo Código Civil, artigo 20.

João Pessoa, 17 de Novembro de 2017.

CASA PEQUENO DAVI  
*Claudia Maria Costa de Lima*  
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